

PROGRESS ON GENEALOGY GOALS

25 June 2021

Specific goals were on the minds of my mother and fellow researchers as early as the 1960s. Other goals I have added as research and DNA uncovered additional mysteries. As I summarize, keep in mind that family histories rely on accuracy of research and documentation. Paper documentation, in many cases, is limited before the 1800s. However, DNA results are confirming many early theories and expanding our family trees. If interested in more in-depth information, read the earlier reports available on my web page. <https://patbunyard.org/dna-research/>

GOAL ONE – Proving a link among families of similar surname and locations.

As early as 1968, family researchers worked to connect various spelling for our Shinabarger surname. The newsletter *Dozen Ss* published family histories of researchers around the US. These histories represented many known variations of spelling, including: Schoenberger or Schönenberger, Shenberger or Shamberger, Shinabarger or Shinabargar, Shinaberry or Shinabery, Shanabarger or Shanabargar, Shaneberger, Shellenbarger and more. The changing of a letter was not unusual. The possibility of changing a surname from Shinaberry to Shinabarger pushed the research. Researchers believed many of these families were descended from the same patriarch. It was never proven.

Both Haplogroup type and marker matches indicating genetic distance (GD) will confirm a relationship and if that relationship is within a genealogical time frame. But two men can also prove totally unrelated within any genealogical time frame of their paternal lines. Their shared ancestry is deeply anthropological and dates to a common African heritage of the human race. In other words, go back far enough in time ALL men are related.

What we seek in genealogy and DNA testing is to connect our families within a more recent time frame, thus potentially finding a common male ancestor in the last 300-400 years (a relationship of about 5th - 7th cousins and sharing someone like a 6X-7X great grandfather). This can and is being done through Y-DNA testing.

DNA has provided confirmation that some of these Dozen S families do share a common ancestor. Currently males representing Shinaberry, Shinabery, Shinabarger, Shinabargar, Shanabarger, Schoenberger, Schoenberg, Shamberger and varieties of these spellings have tested DNA.

CONFIRMED: Y-DNA testing proves that some of the S spellings are definitely not related. The families of Schönenberger/Schoenberger from Switzerland, the family of Balthasar Schonberger born 1690 Germany, Nicholas Shamberger born 1753 Germany, and various Schoenberg spellings are either reporting different Haplogroups or so few DNA marker matches as to indicate we are unrelated within any anthropological time frame. Nor is there indication of a shared relationship with the Shellenbarger surname. This is no large surprise as I have not seen our surname spelled as such, even though it probably was more Germanified at one time.¹

¹ Dozen S researchers speculated Johann Jacob Shoenberger born about 1710 who died in Frederick County, Maryland could be the immigrant patriarch. No evidence has ever been found. Also, researchers thought that the patriarch of the family may have originated in Switzerland. IF this is the case, it is much, much further back in our genealogical time frame.

What was a surprise was that the family of George Peter Shinabarger born 1794 in PA and found in the area of Kunkle, Williams County, Ohio is NOT related to John Shinabarger 1764. A male testing Y-DNA and his female cousin testing autosomal DNA trace their line to William, son of George Peter. A second male and his female cousin have tested autosomal DNA and trace their line to John, son of George Peter. Both family lines trace to a Friederich Schoneberger born 1754 in Germany and who died in PA. Their Y-DNA is a different Haplogroup with a 44% French ethnicity². The second cousin couple, though showing higher German ethnicity, share NO matches with our Shinabarger group. If these Shinabargers are related to our Shinabargers, there should be shared matches. I can only conclude, at this time, that they are a different line who anglicized their name to Shinabarger once they arrived in OH. The “rumor” that this family was related to us, and to Hannah Heller, does not appear to be accurate. I am open to further examination as these two sets of tested cousins do not appear to match each other, either.

CONFIRMED: The families of Shinaberry of Virginia/West Virginia, John Shinabarger 1764 of Ohio, and Shanabarger of Ohio, share a common patriarch in the United States.³ It is probably true that their common ancestor is a 5X to 7X great grandfather who immigrated to America by 1730. It appears the S men, beginning about 1750, were all born in America, most probably in the colonial states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, or Virginia/West Virginia (Pendleton, Pocahontas, Augustus, Highland and other counties were settled, boundaries were redrawn and states formed so one sees a man born in VA and dying in WV yet never relocate). Autosomal DNA testing and comparisons also confirm these families are related.

By linking these families, it is almost certain that John Shinabarger 1764 is related to the Shinaberry families of Virginia. John and his eldest sons consistently say they were born in Virginia. Early records for John Shinabarger also spell his name Shinaberry, including when in 1820 he married Mrs. Mehetable Crofoot Murdock as John Shinaberry. Another piece of confirmation is an 1823 Patent Deed for land that lists him as John Shinneberry and the line “Know ye that John Shineberry (alias) Shinabarger of Wayne County....”

Because of DNA results, I project that John Shinabarger 1764 is the brother of Catherine Shinaberry Trimble born 1763 in Augusta County Virginia. Other siblings are Jacob Shinaberry born about 1760 in Pendleton County VA/WV, and Michael Shinaberry born about 1773 in Virginia. In actual miles, all these people were born in the same region as large counties were carved into smaller counties and state boundaries were drawn. For example, in 1788 Pendleton was carved from parts of Augusta, Hardy and Rockingham Counties. So, over a man’s lifetime, he could have reported being born in either VA or WV.

GOAL TWO – Discovering the identity of our maternal 4X Great Grandmother

For the past 70 years or so, researchers thought the wife of John Shinabarger 1764 was Mehetable. Her surname was the subject of endless speculation. Among those surnames was Murdock. No marriage, reference, or death was ever found. Until 2019.

² This male Y-DNA receives numerous 37-marker matches, something that is not occurring for any of the other men tested.

³ Y-DNA testing shows that the common ancestor shared with the Shanabarger line is further distant; it is impossible to determine just how much earlier we shared a common ancestor. My guess would be about 2 generations or more.

CONFIRMED: Mehetable was the wife of John Shinabarger but NOT the mother of his children. An 1820 marriage license showed a John Shinaberry married Mehetable Murdock. It was thought that this was a first marriage of son James; after the death of Mehetable Murdock (no date ever found), it was thought that James married her sister Elizabeth Murdock. It is a fact that James Shinabarger did marry Elizabeth Murdock in 1825 and fortunately for us, had at least 8 children, the first daughter being named, as was tradition, after the maternal grandmother Mehetable in 1826. There were no children born to John Shinabarger and Mehetable Crofoot Murdock but Mehetable did have 6 children by her first husband, Daniel Murdock. It is through the tracing of DNA from these two families that we can confirm findings.

Several descendants of James Shinabarger and Elizabeth Murdock have tested autosomal DNA.⁴ They trace their common relative back to the paternal ancestor John Shinabarger, but more importantly, they draw a direct line back to Mehetable Crofoot Murdock. And descendants from her first marriage to Daniel Murdock are sharing these connections. The most important fact here is that NO other child of John 1764 could accomplish this as they do not share any connection to a Murdock; no shared matches with Murdock is found among the other sons of John 1764.

That leaves a question: who IS the first wife of John Shinabarger and the mother of his children? Just as the Murdock connection falls into place, there MUST be a surname that is appearing in the autosomal shared matches. I am just not seeing it or able to place it, YET. I do believe the answer is connected with the matches coming out of VA/WV and the Shinaberry family.

I, and other cousins, are finding many solid matches with Catherine Shinaberry who married James Trimble. These matches indicate a 4th to 6th cousin range therefore sharing about a 5X great grandparent which is right in the range we seek. If John and Catherine are siblings as I project, could they have married siblings? The names of Trimble, Samples, Arbogast, Gum, Rexrode, Beverage are common surnames seen in the same time and place. I believe the key is finding Catherine's marriage in 1784, said to have taken place in Maryland but more likely in Augusta/Highland County VA.⁵ I do believe this goal can be achieved.

GOAL THREE – Enjoy genealogy and accept it as never done

I would like to say this is it, but with research and DNA advances, that will never be the case. Each new DNA tester, each new match, every discovered history adds to the family tree. However, I do feel the four above goals have made considerable progress. I will continue to seek people willing to share their DNA. Every match expands the history of our family. I enjoy the research, even down the rabbit holes; I love the travel exploring the ancestral homelands; and I am excited to see each new DNA match that introduces me to another relative.

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⁴ There are also 3 males who have tested Y-DNA linking James Shinabarger to John Shinabarger 1764.

⁵ The daughter of Nancy Shinabarger Treace who died 1865 in CA, consistently says her mother was born in VA and her tombstone reads "Wife of Michael Treace. Native of Fairfax County Virginia".